The Annual Report: Toward Influencing a Public and Corporate Image

Executive Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The significance of a fire department's annual report in constructing a public and corporate image has been studied. The problem of the link between an annual report and its use in developing and maintaining public relations is discussed and applied to a recent annual report of the Peoria, Illinois Fire Department. The purpose of the study was to establish and emphasize the importance of public documents of a fire department and their support of public relation policies. The research method used in this study is the descriptive method that describes the theories that informed production of a recent annual report. The research questions asked: 1) What are the potential uses for published documents, such as annual reports, as they construct the public and corporate image of a fire department? 2) What is the nature of an image? And 3) What is the ideology supported by the most recent annual report that privileges the role of firefighters as members of neighborhoods instead of merely city workers assigned to a nearby station to provide emergency services? The procedures of the study involved applying theories of image use and theories of document design to the production of an annual report distributed to citizens and city officials. This procedure included a recognition of the link between documents intended for public use and their influencing of a fire department's public image. The procedures resulted in the annual report, of which a copy is enclosed with this report. The result intended to support other direct public involvement of firefighters in city neighborhoods and record this involvement in a way that further influences a public and corporate image. Recommendations are also provided to help other fire administrators apply this research in their own department. Links between department policy and public documents are emphasized.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades the Peoria Fire Department has published annual reports that listed statistics and described highlights of the calendar year. Each report contained statistics in the expected categories such as number of alarms, number of fires, and addresses of extra alarm fires, to name a few. As the department grew in size and complexity, the size of the annual report also grew to include the activities of the bureaus such as suppression, prevention, inspections, and administration. By the end of the 1980s, the department's annual reports were between 30 and 40 pages long and contained much data. The report represented an objective, quantifiable report of the year's activities that fulfilled the fire administration's wish to provide data to officials in the local city government as well as to the public. The annual reports were produced in-house, therefore displaying the state of technology then with each produced on a typewriter and then mimeographed. As the 1980s ended, reports displayed the emerging computer technology, with pages now printed on dot-matrix printers and photo copied. The annual reports were almost exclusively text and columns of statistics, lacking any photographs or visual embellishments that would suggest that the fire administration would attempt any creativity or influence of its public image. The fire administration, as did many businesses and corporations, viewed annual reports as a display of the facts as if the facts were somehow self interpreting. The fire administration assumed that readers would easily view the fire department and its activities the way the administration wanted them to because the reports were based on facts and therefore a medium of honesty and truth. Annual reports were meant to document and not to persuade, as if the readers would not be moved or influenced by them. The reports were issued more as an obligation to record

and document than as an opportunity to build and maintain a public and administrative image.

This report shall describe the fire administration's change in thinking that took its annual report from a dull document of record to a commercially produced document designed to influence and persuade the public and members of local city government. I shall describe the process that led to this change in thinking and how computer software and hardware helped influence this change. Moreover, I shall analyze the administrative philosophy that helped effect this change, a philosophy that seeks to position the department within the local city community and place the firefighters as visible and contributing members not only during emergencies. I shall position a recent annual report as a symbol of the new attitude of the fire administration toward shaping the image of the fire department in the community, a symbol that represents the many activities the firefighters now perform as members of neighborhoods served by their fire stations.

As the 1980s ended, the department's annual report also symbolized the relationship between the fire department and the local community. The department relied on its perceived necessity as a service provider to justify its existence. Firefighters were involved in public safety concerns, but only generally, not specifically in their neighborhood areas of influence. The annual report also reflected this attitude, presenting statistics apart from an awareness that readers would understand and relate this data to the immediate concerns of their neighborhoods. The annual reports gave facts and statistics; the fire administration advocated emergency services as a collective end in itself for "the city," not necessarily the neighborhoods. This created a problem of a department that lacked specific involvement in neighborhood communities. Moreover, the department did

not specifically connect its services to neighborhoods via its public information avenues.

This study will show how an annual report can be part of a larger effort to influence the

readers and shape the image of a fire department. As applied to the Peoria Fire

Department, the annual report both reported new and enhanced firefighter activities in

neighborhoods and helped convey this new attitude to policy makers in city government,

to members of neighborhood groups, and to the general public. The annual report has

increased the visibility of the fire department and became an icon along with the red fire

engines, turnout gear, and SCBA that define the department. This study shall analyze the

uses and importance of an annual report in supporting the construction and maintenance

of this very public icon, one that the fire administration should privilege as much as we

do our other ones.

I chose the descriptive research method because the significant effect of this

report has already occurred; that is, the City of Peoria fire administration now sees the

correlation of public and corporate image to its annual report. This correlation was not

necessarily planned, but converged as computer technology advanced and fire

administrators identified and supported direct involvement in neighborhoods. A

description of this convergence may inform other fire administrators how publications

can support administrative policy and activities to the point where the publications can

set the tone and direction of policy and serve as part of its visible representation both

within and outside of the department. This convergence may not have been readily

apparent to administrators were it not through the screen of rhetoric as identified as an

administrative characteristic. That is, when we view administrations as influencing

others, we often think of direct influences through written rules and standard operating

guidelines. However, administrations also construct influences in less direct ways. When we expand our view of influence to areas beyond direct ways we see the other ways that may in some cases speak louder than our direct ones.

The research questions addressed in this study are: 1) What are the potential uses for published documents such as annual reports, fire safety pamphlets, and on-line sites as they construct the public and corporate image of a fire department? Although this study focuses on the hard copy document of an annual report, I believe similar concerns apply to a web site managed by a fire department. I am interested in the shift in use of an annual report, moving from a document intended to inform to a document intended to persuade and therefore construct a public image of a local fire department.

2) What is the nature of an image? After focusing on the annual report as a tool in image production, I want to explore the nature of image, specifically image as interpreted by the postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard as he posits a range of four discrete purposes of image. We should not assume that an image intends to represent reality; often it may distort reality, hide the absence of a reality, or finally, have no reference to any reality but is its own simulacra, a copy upon copy for which no original exists. I should like to examine the possibilities of the image as constructed by an annual report whose goal is now more than the mere reporting of data.

3) Finally, what is the ideology supported by the most recent annual report? What thought is behind the annual report that privileges the role of firefighters as members of neighborhoods instead of workers assigned to a station to provide emergency services? In nearly all cases, the people, equipment, and facilities have remained the same, but now especially the people are viewed differently. This difference challenges our uses of

language, suggesting that the relationship between a word and its referent is never static or objective and is always subject to human uses that may often involve self-interest.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Until the annual report of 1997, annual reports described only the activities of the fire department as they related internally. Reports described a department as if it were removed from its contexts that ranged from individual citizens, neighborhoods and larger municipal areas such as "The West Bluff" or "Southtown." From descriptions in the reports, the department was isolated from the public and its actions and services disconnected from its primary reason for existence: the public. Reports were centered on the department and limited its descriptions of activities to their effects on the department. For example, fire suppression activities were described as events occurring only in the fire department. These incidents were described in terms of alarm status, number of personnel, and amount of damages. In other areas, administrative news focused on policies and events as they affected only internal operations. Statistics appeared without any explanation of what they represented or what they could mean to citizens and neighborhoods concerning their fire protection. Perhaps the most significant sign of this detachment from community was the near absence of pictures of human beings in the reports. As reports grew in length and printing budgets increased for the annual report, photographs began appearing in the mid 1990s. However, those photographs emphasized fire and damage, as if they were ends in themselves. The human effects and consequences were ignored. These annual reports represented an administration focused on itself, as an administration concerned with being an administration and perpetuating its need for

existence through statistics and facts which supported the concept of "organizational entity" required to manage objects and tangibles such as fire apparatus, fire stations, personnel, and abstract policies. Moreover, in addition to the scarcity of human beings seen in these annual reports, very few other than a few top chiefs were mentioned by proper name. The human being was absent, and with this absence the department could not identify itself to any degree to any neighborhood.

Our department conducted many fire safety presentations to many school and public groups, an activity that continues to this day. However, these presentations were often separate from an identification to a neighborhood or residential area. The topics were always fire or life safety, but the firefighters were not identified as belonging to a specific neighborhood. This also applied to the individual citizens attending these presentations. They were part of the school or civic group, but not a neighborhood.

By the mid 1990s the fire administration perceived this disconnection of firefighter from neighborhood as a problem that could affect the role and public image of the fire department, especially as City policy makers began to emphasize neighborhood identification and improvement throughout the City. The Peoria Fire Administration took this change in policy focus as a sign of future political emphasis and then adjusted department activities to link them to neighborhoods. The focus on neighborhoods did not originate with the fire administration, yet it recognized the support it could receive from council members and City administrators if the fire department emphasized its presence in the many neighborhoods.

The new emphasis on neighborhoods also was appearing in different policies in the police department, which has for many years organized Neighborhood

Watch groups and had recently begun the concept of Community-based policing. In their focus on neighborhoods, the police administration was ahead of the fire administration and was therefore more visible to city council members and policy makers who favored departments explicitly involved in neighborhoods.

Although the fire administration may have been behind the police department in visible and direct involvement in neighborhoods, the fire chief knew that the fire department had some inherent advantages in its fire station locations and work hours that he could promote. He would link each fire station to the neighborhood in which it was located and also link the firefighters in that station as neighbors, not just City workers on assignment.

The fire stations provide a physical and visible presence in neighborhoods. They are often located in easily accessible parts of the City and are close to major streets. This displays the stations to many citizens as they drive by. With this visual strength, the chief planned to expand this image to include the visible and real presence of firefighters in those neighborhoods in close proximity to the station and to other neighborhoods within the territories of each station. The chief urged each firefighter to become involved in the concerns of neighborhoods, involvement that included clean-up projects, light carpentry work for park improvements, and membership in the many neighborhood associations in Peoria. To promote this policy, the chief and members of the fire administration, as well as the president of the firefighters union, all visited each fire station on all three shifts to announce the official involvement of the fire department into neighborhood concerns. The chief called this involvement, "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" and it succinctly described the intention of this new way to think of firefighters. To be sure, the firefighters

were the same, firefighters who were often already much involved in community activities, but not necessarily linked to a specific neighborhood.

The fire department was attempting to change its image from that of an organization that was often abstracted away from individual human faces to a compilation of many faces with names who wanted to be included as neighbors, not just firefighters at stations. The firefighter neighbors were to be involved in routine neighborhood concerns such as beautification, improvements and quality of life, not involved only for emergencies.

The fire administration set the direction for this change of policy that would change the image. Note that the image became the goal and its construction relied upon the singular activity of "being there," whether it was at neighborhood meetings, civic events, or neighborhood cleaning days. The fire department was gaining faces to complement the long-time image of a fire engine and fire helmet.

As this image of the department changed, the fire chief believed that this change should factor prominently in the publications of the fire department. The annual report is perhaps the most significant document produced by the fire department that affects its image in the minds of council members and citizens. The chief decided to use the annual report to emphasize the new image through two ways: 1) focus on the firefighters, the human aspect of its service and not the fire department as an abstract organization; and 2) design the annual report so that its appearance and content differs significantly from conventional bulky annual reports that privilege statistics. He accomplished the first tactic by filling the report with photographs of firefighters at work among citizens, whether those surroundings were emergencies or neighborhood events.

He accomplished the second tactic by keeping the size of the annual report small, usually from six to ten pages commercially designed and printed. The chief knew that the annual reports of the other City departments were bulky and contained many statistics and narratives of no interest to any one outside of those departments, yet were distributed primarily to outsiders. The chief analyzed this outside audience and sought to include only items of general interest. Moreover, he wanted the document attractive and enticing to the reader and size, or heft, was an important factor that determines whether or not a reader will open a document. The chief assumed that busy council members and other City administrators would more likely open a short, visually appealing document instead of a long document approaching 100 pages, especially if much of that document was statistics and accompanying narrative.

In planning the annual report, the chief knew the size and detail of the annual reports of other City departments such as police, finance, public works, and others. He also knew that most of the content of these reports went unread because they contained too much detail for the intended audience. Among these other bulky annual reports, the chief knew that a brief but professionally produced document would make the annual report of the fire department stand out, in a positive way. His prediction proved correct, as the chief received many favorable comments from other department heads as he submitted the fire department annual report at a City staff meeting. The striking difference of the annual report became a symbol to the other department heads of the activities and *ethos* of the fire department, an ethos that suggested that the department was attune to the perceptions of people and that it produced a public document that reflected this policy. The annual report influenced the image of the fire department in the

minds of the city staffers in part through a document, an event that perhaps represents a salient acquaintance with the fire department that collects and summarizes other impressions they may see in other administrative encounters with the fire department. This influence of the annual report ties in to the Executive Leadership course because it shows how a department can support its role in the community through influencing the public perception of the fire department. Many council members see firefighters in neighborhood meetings or at public safety events in their districts and form general impressions of the department through these individual encounters. These all are further complemented and advanced by their ascertainment in a professionally produced document that reinforces the idea and image of firefighter presence and involvement in neighborhoods.

My interest in examining the relationship of annual report to influencing public image lies in the deliberate construction of a public image, an abstraction perhaps more often thought of as public relations, but nonetheless reliant upon an image. To be sure, the image of the fire department does not depend primarily upon the appearance and content of the annual report; rather, my interest focuses on the image and how the annual report factors in supporting and influencing that image. My use of the phrase "public image" covers more than an abstraction of citizens, but includes images formed by City policy makers such as council members and city administrators. This study has forced me to consider the multiple images the fire department may present, images contingent upon the audience and context. In other words, the fire department may appear one way to a citizen, another way to a council member, and still another way to our own employees, the firefighters. This study of images identifies the existence and importance of these

multiple images and reveals their transient nature and susceptibility to change, for better or worse. Once we know the nature of the image and how it is constructed, we may assess its usefulness as it works among our various groups of people with whom we exist, groups that can often affect and influence the existence and evolution of the fire department.

LITERATURE REVIEW

My understanding of image as it relates to its use in the Peoria Fire Department has been informed by the work of Jean Baudrillard (1983) as he discusses the nature of the image in his article, "Precession of Simulacra." Baudrillard proposes four categories of an image, into which a referent may be placed; however, the placement of the image hinges on arbitrary decisions of groups of users of those images. Moreover, membership in any category does not necessarily remain static. Baudrillard posits the following four categories:

First level, where the image assumes a one-to-one relationship with its referent. The first level is the most common level and the one into which we rely on for many routine daily activities. For example, we believe a mirror produces a reasonable image of its referent, the human being looking into it. Likewise, we assume a road map provides us with a scale version of highways and landmarks as we travel. Other common first-level images include photographs, video, and most commonly, the relationship we place between a word and its referent. We rely on this first level of image to help us order and make sense of reality.

In the <u>second level</u> of image, the image is intentionally distorted by its handler, which may or may not also be the referent. In the second level lies the popular use of camouflage to hide or distort the referent. The difference between the first and second level occurs when the one-to-one correspondence weakens, reality has become distorted. However, this distortion may not always be apparent to the viewer; and may also not be apparent to the handler or referent. In the case of the annual report, the handler, in our case, the fire chief, hopes the annual report represents a close one-to-one correspondence to the events as they actually happened. He further hopes that the image presented by the commercial quality document transfers closely to its referent, the abstract image of the fire department. An item often overlooked by readers of the public is that the annual report cannot offer a complete picture of the department, much as a mirror cannot reflect an entire image of the human being before it. The mirror shows us only one side, one view. This realization of a partial view means that other views or images may be suppressed or unintentionally ignored. Moreover, it means that the constructor or handler of the image, in this case, the chief, can choose to emphasize, diminish, or delete images, based on his ideal image of the fire department. This factor of choice argues that an image is inherently man-made and heavily subjective, that a presumed objectivity cannot exist. That an image is often constructed and involves choice suggests that most images then are indeed at the second level, where distortion of some kind will reside inherently in any image. We can never have a complete one-to-one correspondence, which leads us always to question the image we see and its relation to its referent.

Baudrillard's <u>third level</u> of image removes the referent even further from the image. At this level the image exists to mask the absence of the referent. Images here

assume a referent, yet the referent does not exist. In this category we may place

contemporary images such as Santa Claus and other whimsical fantasies at one level, on

to others areas where some theorist would include religions and their often extensive

system of iconography that is rich in images, all to mask the reality that the referent, in

this case, a deity, does not exist. If the second level of images involved distortions that

may be unintentional, images at the third level overtly intend to deceive. Images at the

third level may appear in an image of a fire department when image handlers intend to

show productivity, industry, and cooperation where there is none.

At the fourth level of image, Baudrillard completes his classification

system by describing images that have no referent at all. He describes them as "copies

upon copies for which no original exists." In effect, the image possesses no referent but

itself, the image is its own referent, what he describes as a product that can only occur in

postmodernity. This suggests the image does not describe reality, but a condition he calls

hyper real, a confused, de-centered clutter of images where viewers cannot link an image

to any meaningful reality. The fourth-level image, writes Baudrillard, became necessary

through the current cultural phenomena of postmodernity, a way of thinking and living

that denies an absolute or center of things; hence, no image can center on a fixed referent.

Postmodernity attempts to break static one-to-one correspondences and seeks to

destabilize relationships between image and referent so that any relationship cannot stay

fixed or primary for long.

This review of Baudrillard's work with the nature of images helps inform

my assessment of the image or images fire administrators attempt to construct when

seeking to strengthen or change the public image of the fire department. His fourth-level

category of images may not be useful in an administrator's process of constructing or influencing an image because I think most fire departments seek to keep their images stable and not susceptible to frequent change. However, the first three levels of his system may factor into considerations of any public image. Fire administrators, as constructors of images, may intend their images to exist at the first level, at the level of one-to-one correspondence, but Baudrillard's discussion of the other two levels makes this link nearly impossible. Administrators should then realize that they will be working among the other two levels, an existence that may ironically fulfill the definition of these two categories as image-makers seek to push their images into the first level.

We now will move from the level of theory on the image to applying it to the particular circumstance of the annual report. In this application, I shall approach its relevance to the annual report at two levels: 1) the visual aspects of the document, and 2) the textual aspects. Both areas work toward constructing an image, each with its own way of persuasion.

For the visual aspects, I shall begin with the visual theories of a document set by Charles Kostelnick in *Designing Visual Language* (1998). Kostlenick proposes a taxonomy for a visual vocabulary that allows designers of documents to recognize and classify visual features. Like Baudrillard, Kostlenick proposes four categories in which decisions of visual persuasion may occur: 1) intra, 2) inter, 3) extra, and 4) supra. The intra level covers features such as typography, kerning, and punctuation marks, what Kostelnick calls "the building blocks, the atoms, and particles, for the visible text" (87).The inter level describes headings, paragraphs and graphic features such as bullets and linework. Items at this level, Kostelnick writes, "help readers comprehend the

text—line to line, paragraph to paragraph, column to column—within a given field" (88). The third level, extra-level design, is external to the text and includes features such as legends for figures, picture sizes and perspective, and color. They often may exist autonomously with their own visual convention yet have meaning only within the context of the document and are thus dependent on it. The final level describes the supra-textual design of a document and this level, I think, offers the most influence in our construction of a public and corporate image of the fire department. Kostelnick writes that, "The supra-level includes top-down design elements that visually define, structure, and unify the entire document, whether print or electronic. Because supra-level design is so obvious and pervasive, it often influences design decisions on the other three levels" (95). I found Kostelnick's discussion of the supra-textual level useful because his emphasis on the visual reception of the whole document emphasizes the document more as an image in itself instead of words and text that must rely on the language processing ability of the reader to create images in his mind. Kostelnick's emphasis of the supra-textual level acknowledges the first impression of a document the instant a reader encounters it, and urges writers and document designers to privilege this factor because it informs the subsequent impressions of the reader. Circumspect writers, therefore, should insure that the supra-textual features cohere with features at the other levels and so that the whole document appears unified, a unification that improves the reception and readability of the document.

Kostelnick's idea of a document as its own image then may inform a public image strategy for fire administrators as they insure that the image of the document stays consistent with their desired public image. Even though the document may have an

autonomous image, that autonomy may function as the representative image of the fire department, as sort of official and sanctioned image not quite unlike a department patch sewn onto a uniform. A uniform patch may carry more status among department personnel and less with the public, making it less of a public image and therefore less likely to shape a public image of the department. The annual report, however, brings the factor of formality that delivers a department image to contexts not accessible by a patch or the presence of individual firefighters and apparatus.

The supra-textual level acknowledges the importance of image as it suggests that neutral or disinterested readers may not open a document unless it looks inviting and piques an interest. It acknowledges that facts or data cannot exist on their own but must be mediated by extra- and supra-level features in a document that appeal to human senses and preferences other than logic and reasoning. These features use aesthetic qualities such as appearance, touch, and creativity, all to argue the pervasive necessity of human influence in relaying and interpreting facts.

At this level and at the extra-textual level of a document, the work of Patrick Moore and Chad Fitz has framed ways of designing a document using principles of Gestalt psychology theory. This theory predicts the way human beings will process visual data in visual fields such as a computer screen and a page. In "Gestalt theory and instructional design," (1993) they offer six categories designers of text may use to assess their placement of visuals and layout to accommodate the expectations of readers. The categories are: 1) closure (items boxed by lines or white space appear related); 2) proximity, (items close together appear related); 3) similarity, (items that look similar will appear related); 4) symmetry; (items in balance will appear complete); 5) line

continuation, (readers often follow lines beyond their ending points); and 6) figure-ground segregation, (figures should be distinct from their backgrounds). The work of Moore and Fitz becomes useful in arranging documents so that items such as graphs, photos, margins, embellishments all consider reader expectations; in other words, they should subtly make it easy for readers to navigate through the text. The Gestalt principles apply to the visual features of a document and offer guides for document designers for placement and use of visual elements, even to the extent of choosing visual content so that it coheres with imagery prompted by the text.

In considering the text, the work of James Souther has perhaps endured more than any other in offering guidelines for writers of reports, including annual reports. In a landmark study in 1962, Souther studied the reading habits and expectations of managers and other readers of reports at Westinghouse to determine what elements of a report are most useful. The results of his study apply to many genres of reports: technical, business, and annual, wherever documents are produced where readers make decisions on the presentation of facts and data. Souther found that despite the work of many writers, many reports are unread because they fail to engage the reader with useful information. These unread reports may indeed contain facts, but they are not presented or interpreted in ways for busy readers who are looking for direction in making decisions. Souther also found that if readers begin reading reports, they might only skim the reports, stopping to read short sections. The most important item in a report is the conclusion and recommendation, which Souther found often occurred at the end of the report, which often made it difficult for readers to find. To correct this, Souther recommended that these sections appear at the front of reports.

Moreover, Souther found that readers do not primarily want facts, but the judgements of the writers of how the facts or data may be useful to the topic. Souther discovered that more than facts, managers want judgement so they as managers may make decisions. Applied to an annual report, the readers may not necessarily read the document for help in making decisions, but readers will form images based on the way facts, data, and highlights are presented. By assembling an annual report, a fire department must provide cues and guides for interpretation so that readers may see the elements of the text as useful in forming images and satisfying their curiosity of the activities of the fire department.

The annual report of the Peoria Fire Department, with its new emphasis on the reader rather than objectivity, follows an emerging theory explained in the late 1970s by Carolyn Miller in "A humanistic rationale for technical writing" (1979). This humanistic rationale has become part of the postmodern ethos in these last days of the 20th century that seeks to de-center established paradigms of modernism such as objectivity, science, and fact. Where meaning existed externally and we as human beings had to work through reason and logic to reach the truth, the humanistic rationale maintains that the truth is constructed through language in a relationship between the writer and reader. She writes,

> This new epistemology makes human knowledge thoroughly relative and
> science fundamentally rhetorical . . . whatever we know of reality is
> created by individual action and by communal assent. Reality cannot be
> separated from our knowledge of it; knowledge cannot be separated from
> the knower; the knower cannot be separated from a community. Facts do
> not exist independently, waiting to be found and collected and

systematized; facts are human constructions that presuppose theories. We

bring to the world a set of innate and learned concepts which help us

select, organize, and understand what we encounter (p. 615).

Applied to an annual report, this theory privileges the needs of the reader and places

responsibility for creating understanding on the writer. The writer must seek approval

from the reader, an approval that relies on the ability of the writer to express his message

visually and textually in ways the reader can understand. Perhaps the most salient part of

the theory explained by Miller occurs in the decline of objectivity and the rise in

subjectivity. Miller's explanation also blends with the theory of image presented by

Baudrillard because both authors deny a static referent to which we apply words and

images. The relationship between words and images and their referent is always

negotiable between participants in communication, a dynamic that allows for change in

language and meaning.

The relationship between writer and reader has been developed by H. P. Grice in

his work with the elements of conversation, elements that also apply to texts. In *Studies*

in the ways of words (1989) Grice proposed a principle of cooperation that must initiate

and maintain any conversation, a conversation that implies at least two human beings. In

his Cooperative Principle, any conversation must have four essential elements: 1)

quantity, 2) quality, 3) relation, and 4) manner. Briefly, *quantity* means that conversations

or texts should contain neither too little nor too much information. His *quality*

requirement means that the participants are expected to speak or write the truth. In

manner, the conversation must be unambiguous and coherent. Finally, in *relation*, the

parts and elements of the discourse must be related or cohesive. In planning our annual

report, all four elements were addressed as follows: 1) Quantity was neglected in previous reports that were too long and contained information of no interest or use to citizens and city administrators. 2) Quality covers the ethical realm, providing abstract understandings of truth for application in particular matters such as statistics, photographs, tables, and graphs so that they may not mislead readers nor twist facts. 3) The element of manner guides design and layout considerations at the visual level to address the many levels of text suggested by Kostelnick, (intra, inter, extra, and supra) so that each level appears as a coherent and cohesive whole. 4) The last element, relation, is perhaps the most useful element in our construction of image because it prescribes that our report must be relevant to the lives, interests, and needs of the readers. We have all been in conversations where the other speaker wanders from our interest, a deviation that if allowed to continue causes us apprehension and a desire to end the discourse relationship. This also applies in texts, except that with texts the readers usually have much more freedom to decide if they want to participate at all. Grice assumes the necessity of a writer reader relationship that must be maintained. This relationship also occurs in print, where the job of the writer becomes more difficult because the relationship is often mediated by distance in time and space, as well as by the visual cues of the document. In a sense, the conversation manifests itself in the physical properties of the document that pulls the conversation from a level of abstraction to a referent that can be seen and felt.

The work of Grice has encouraged other researchers to apply his Cooperation Principle to related fields. A study by Kathyrn Riley and Frank Parker (1998) matched all four of Grice's conversational elements to visual features of a text. They argue that the

similarity of visual features to textual features suggests that both domains are informed

by the same principles of human cognition. To make their analogy, Riley and Parker rely

on the Gestalt principles as presented by Moore and Fitz (discussed earlier) and make the

following connections: 1) line continuation of Gestalt parallels the relation element of

Grice because both assume relation and continuity; 2) the figure-ground segregation of

Gestalt parallels the manner element of Grice because both assume perspicuity ; 3)

closure of Gestalt parallels the quantity element of Grice because both assume a sense of

completeness; and 4) similarity of Gestalt parallels the quality element of Grice because

both assume a distinction among contexts between truth and falsehood.

This research so far has focused on metatextual and visual features of a text that

support the creation of an image through relationship. Now I will address the matters of

the text itself—the words, sentences, and paragraphs—because they also must

complement visual elements in participating in the writer-reader relationship.

Recent work in linguistics has introduced the concept of metadiscourse in texts, a

concept that includes the necessity of human mediation in all communication. Briefly, the

term "metadiscourse" blends the prefix "meta-" meaning "above, or at a higher level" and

"discourse" or communication. Originating in linguistics and quickly adopted by the

fields of composition and rhetoric, metadiscourse is considered "writing about writing" or

"discourse about discourse" (Williams 1997). Metadiscourse is the writing that authors

use to help readers navigate a text. All human beings use metadiscourse, but like most

linguistics concepts, users do not know that the speech act has a name. Theorists of

metadiscourse write that discourse has two levels: 1) the propositional content,

considered the facts or substance of the text; and 2) the metadiscourse, the other words,

grammar, and syntax that structures the message to makes it understandable to the listener or reader (Vande Kopple 1983). The significance of metadiscourse for this study on annual reports occurs in the theory that no text conveys bare facts, as if facts or propositional content alone suffices for communication (Mao 1993). All communication, whether textual, visual, or auditory must inherently pass through human screens that influence the message. These human screens exist on the writer and reader, sender and receiver, or speaker and listener. No participant handles unmediated propositional content.

These theories in visual and textual discourse inform the purpose and strategy of writers as they plan, write, and publish documents, including annual reports. This review of the literature helps describe the rhetorical system in which any communicator exists, a system that has evolved from its early stages 20 years ago. This system acknowledges that pure fact and objectivity is inaccessible and that the best writers can do is to intelligently create meaning so that it becomes useful to readers. This makes all writing, in a sense, creative, as writers use content and rhetorical devices to construct meaning and understanding in the minds of readers.

PROCEDURES

The first step toward implementing revisions in a change in the public image of a fire department is setting a goal for the public image and deciding on what referent this image is to be based. Fire departments may find it easy to construct their image on the speed of their response time, the quality of their training, and the appearance of their buildings, apparatus, and equipment. These referents are all-important and should not be

diminished. Yet I found that for the Peoria Fire Department, these separate factors needed to come together so that they are meaningful to the citizens and public officials. To be sure, the actions of the fire department perhaps are primary in establishing a relationship with the public. However, the decision of the fire administration to highlight relationship over all other factors in its annual report became the key to linking its annual report to the neighborhood activities in which it was involved. This link constructs a unified public image where the department's most significant publication—the annual report—supports and privileges the relationships with citizens built by the firefighters.

Replication of this link and resulting public image hinges on the determination of the fire administration to involve itself with individuals and groups in City neighborhoods, an involvement that must go beyond providing emergency services to highlighting fire department membership in neighborhoods on the same level as the residents. Establishing this relationship takes time and whose discussion is worthy of another study similar to this. However, once this relationship is established, the fire administration must intelligently record and describe this activity in its annual report, a record and description that requires audience analysis of the readers and knowledge of the various rhetorical strategies inherent in document production.

Our fire administration relied on the many photographs taken by our public education officer. He had hundreds of photographs of firefighters helping citizens in neighborhood clean-up days, attending neighborhood group meetings, and instructing groups in fire safety. The key is focusing on firefighters among citizens in all parts of neighborhood life. In fact, our most recent annual report (enclosed with this paper)

contains very few photographs of fires or fire department related equipment. The focus—often close ups—is on the interaction and relationships we have with other human beings.

These good intentions, theories of images, and knowledge of document design had to manifest themselves in the annual report. Toward this product, members of the fire administration met with representatives from a local publishing company who helped frame the scope of the annual report, choose photographs, and decide upon a layout theme consistent with the research reviewed earlier. The group worked through many drafts, discussing factors such as audience, content, document length, number of photographs per page, cost, distribution, as well as many others. The process, from initial meetings to publication and distribution, took about six months.

The group, of which I was a member, decided that the annual report should target two primary audiences: City administrators, to include members of the city council, and the general public. We also realized through this process that we could not achieve an objective "best" document as the final draft, but only achieve a useful document, useful in our construction of our image of the fire department and useful for citizens and City administrators. In short, this procedure cannot be replicated specifically by other fire departments, only generally as the strong factors of the individual preferences of the human participants and the local contexts guided the work toward the final document. This perhaps is a limitation of this descriptive study, yet this limitation is necessary to prevent the strong contextual and individual process from being extracted and imported into another context where it may not work as well and need significant modification.

RESULTS

A copy of our annual report, which is enclosed with this report and will be discussed later in this section, represents a manifestation of a result of this research. The annual report indeed is *a* result but the fire administration hopes it is not the only result. To be sure, we hope the annual report works as a tool among others in influencing and shaping the image of the fire department in the minds of citizens and City administrators. Toward this result, I now return to my three research questions and describe this tool of the annual report as it relates to each question.

Question #1) What are the potential uses for published documents such as annual reports, fire safety pamphlets, and on-line sites as they construct the public and corporate image of a fire department? These documents, but primarily the annual report, were found to be arbitrary in their construction of a reality as they frame the context through the concept of metadiscourse of the facts or propositional content given to readers. In answering the research question, I must focus on the phrase "potential uses" because I realize these documents, as human constructions, are primarily rhetorical and subject to the designs and goals of the authors. These goals sometimes do not coincide with the needs of the readers, which may result in useless documents. Moreover, the potential users of documents may sometimes incorrectly assume the presence of an objective truth in an annual report simply because we call it a report and is conveying items that we call facts. The rhetorical context of the report instead suggests that a fire administration is more negotiating the truth-value of the events in a given year in an annual report, hoping that the reader will find them believable and useful.

Question #2) What is the nature of image? The work of Baudrillard   alerted me of the different levels of image and the potential for abuse in each. Applied to the annual report, Baudrillard's work shows the impossibility of a first-level image because the annual report cannot provide a comprehensive and exhaustive account of a year's activity. I learned that the annual report therefore must exist on the second level that includes distortions as we choose what content to include and exclude, as well as how much detail to devote to any topic. The image at the second level (distortion) may carry a negative connotation but it acknowledges the selective processes of all human communication and the packaging for delivery made necessary through metadiscourse.

Question #3) What is the ideology supported by the most recent annual report that privileges the role of firefighters as members of neighborhoods instead of workers assigned to a station to provide emergency services? This question addresses the reason *why* the annual report looks the way it does and *why* it contains the content it does. These factors do not emerge neutrally or even as *a priori* propositions but are completely dependent upon the will of the author and his view of the context and the image he seeks to display. In the case of our most recent annual report, the fire administration recognized the popularity and clout that neighborhood involvement has in Peoria and other cities and chose to emphasize the department's strong placement and visibility in the community. The department's appeal to citizens where they live seeks to develop the image of the department that citizens and City administrators form through direct and indirect contact with the department. This appeal acknowledges the department's reliance upon these two groups because they often can shape the budgets that determine the size, services, and working conditions of the firefighters. The ideology of the annual report seeks to

privilege the relationship of those most responsible for the providing fire administrators with the resources to manage a fire department: the citizens and City administrators.

A copy of the annual report is enclosed with this report. Although I believe it can speak for itself, some production details may be worth noting. The 12- page document relied on many photographs taken during the year by the public education officer of the department. We also used a few photographs that appeared in the local newspaper. The document design and writing occurred in-house, with drafts saved on floppy disks and taken to a local commercial printer for photo insertion. Once at the printer, the layout received color additions and set-up for the press run. As mentioned earlier, the annual report took about six months to complete, from early meetings that brainstormed the ideology to the final draft. Early work was sporadic, with the bulk of the work occurring in the final two months. The annual report cost just under $5,000 for 500 copies. Distribution included all of the city council members, City department heads, and leaders of neighborhood groups.

Finally, the ultimate result came from the many compliments the report generated from members of its intended audience. This feedback was unsolicited but we think indicates a strong sign that the report achieved its goal of influencing and shaping public image and promoting a positive image of the fire department.

DISCUSSION

Feedback from members of the intended audience, alluded to above, helps the fire administration determine whether or not the document achieved the intended result of influencing the public image of the fire department. The fire administration believes that

the positive feedback indeed complements the many letters of appreciation and words of kindness firefighters received from becoming involved in the City's neighborhoods. The annual report continues this positive environment and shows citizens and City administrators that the fire administration privileges the neighborhood involvement to the point of making it a strong theme for fire department identity. Along with the typical idea of firefighters responding to emergencies, the annual report helps build the image that firefighters are involved members of neighborhoods in many aspects and concerns of neighborhood life. The fire department thus becomes less of a City service detached from the citizens to more of another neighbor who has positive contributions.

The annual report helps the fire department participate in neighborhood relationship through conversation taking the form of the printed word. Recalling the work discussed earlier of H.P. Grice, the annual report seeks to initiate conversation with the citizens and City administrators, conversations that may result in relationships. The important part of the annual report is its focus on the audience—the citizen—and the necessity of relationship. From Grice's Cooperative Principle conveyed through Gestalt theory in visuals and metadiscourse in text, the annual report recognizes the rich supply of communicative measures available to interact with citizens. The fire administration applied these measures in the print medium, but I believe we have learned that these same measures apply to other mediums as well: in direct conversation as in safety presentations and during neighborhood group meetings, and in an electronic medium such as web pages.

I interpret these results as displaying the necessity of language in constructing images and establishing relationships. This realization shows the error in assuming that

facts and data are self-interpreting and that they can stand on their own. Moreover, I now realize that a fire administration's job does not end in only presenting facts and data when assembling an annual report, but must insure that information is suitable for its intended audience. The nature of image, as discussed by Baudrillard, also convinced me of the slippery relationship between an image and its referent. The many levels of image showed me the responsibility fire administrators have in choosing what data to privilege and the considerations they must have in determining whether or not their representations are truthful and fair.

The feedback I have heard from our most recent annual report also can impact the work culture of the department as firefighters see the neighborhood relationship supported and emphasized by the fire administration. The report shows the firefighters that they are the most important link in this relationship with citizens and City administrators. The photos and accompanying text highlight the activities of the firefighters and encourages them to maintain these relationships because they have administrative support. Moreover, the theories used in assembling the annual report may also apply to in-house relationships. The administration must also communicate and interact with its own personnel as well as with the public. The outside use may also be directed within, to help the department deal with administrative and personnel problems as they arise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We cannot now predict the duration that our neighborhood involvement policy will receive top billing in our annual report. However, I hope that the human dimension

will always remain present because it inherently factors into everything we do. I have not seen any drawbacks to our neighborhood policy, so I predict we will continue promoting it to reap the benefits it conveys to the citizens and our department.

This study has described the annual report as it appeared in hard-copy, yet the theories discussed all apply to documents on-line. A further step could include making the annual report available on-line as a web site, as a link from our existing home page. Web sites are flexible enough that I believe the essence of the report can be preserved on-line, even though we cannot always control the quality of the image as it appears on the widely varying quality of the monitors of users. Given the ease with which materials may appear on-line, I would recommend that other departments consider on-line versions to supplement hard-copy versions. The on-line versions are much less expensive to produce because of the absence of printing costs, which were the largest part of the hard-copy versions.

Finally, I recommend to potential users of this study to consider the theories not only as ways to construct and influence a public image, but also as reflective tools to examine one's own fire department to identify factors that construct public images and whether or not those factors match the images sought by the fire administration. Moreover, this study can help fire administrators realize the necessity of images when dealing with city administrators and citizens and that these images may be controlled in many ways, one of which is an annual report. Fire administrations may decide to emphasize some images while omitting or marginalizing others. The key to controlling images is recognizing their potential and understanding the power they have in establishing relationships.

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NEIGHBORS

HELPING

NEIGHBORS

Peoria Fire Department

1998 ANNUAL REPORT

From the Chief

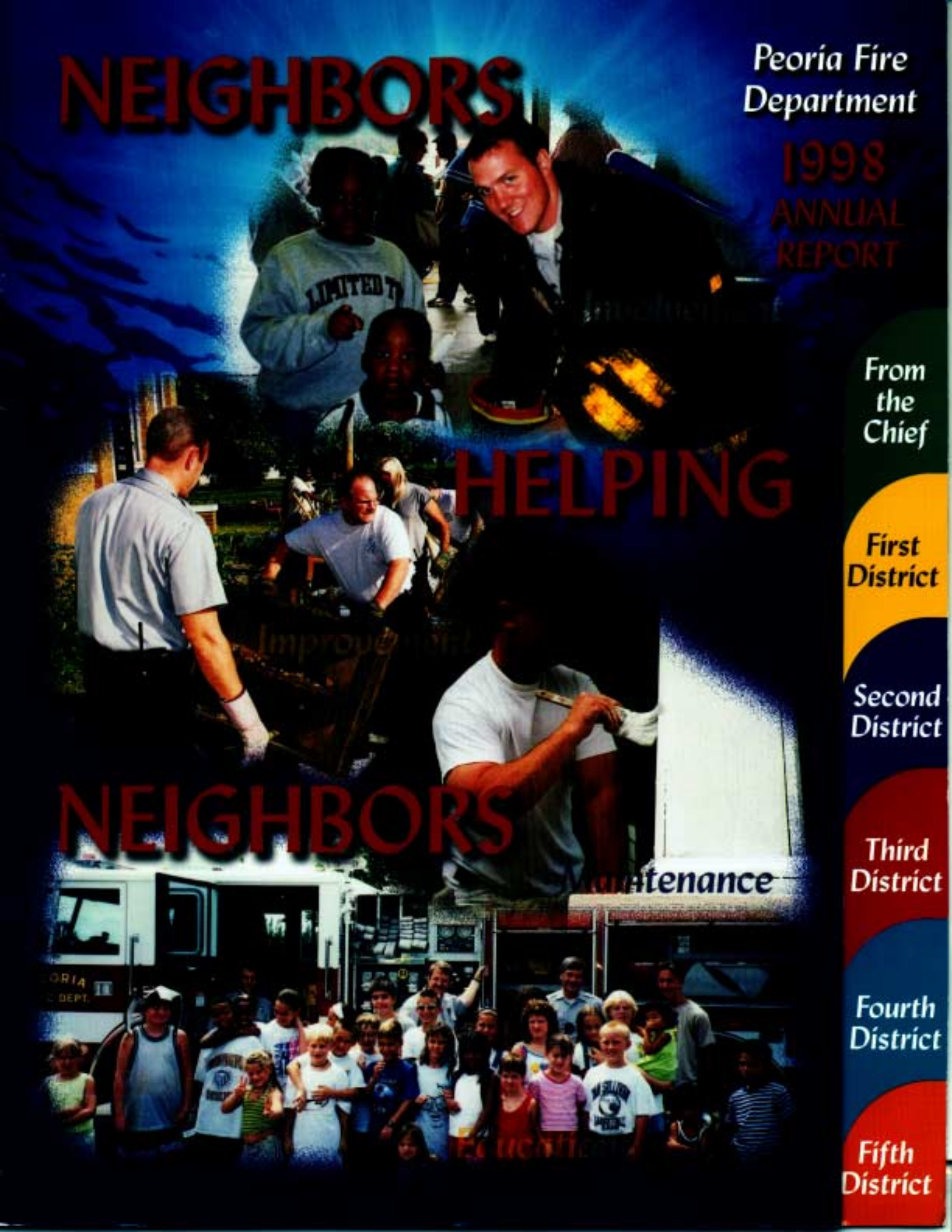First District

Second District

Third District

Fourth District

Fifth District

Involvement

Improvement

Maintenance

Education

City of Peoria Elected and Appointed Officials

Mayor

Lowell G. Grieves

Council Members

At Large

Camille M. Gibson
Dr. Edward P. Glover
Charles V. Grayeb
W. Eric Turner
Leonard A. Unes

District

1st Christopher Duncan II
2nd Gary V. Sandberg
3rd Gale S. Thetford
4th William R. Spears
5th Patrick A. Nichting

City Manager

Michael D. McKnight

City Clerk
Mary Haynes

City Assessor
Bradley Horton

City Treasurer
Mary Ulrich

Fire Chief

Ernie Russell

Board of Fire and Police Commissioners

Richard J. Ausfahl
Calvin G. Butler, Jr.
Robin P. Graham
Cheryl J. Kuppler
Desh Paul Mehta
Michael L. McCabe
James A. Wright

the fire dept.
CITY OF PEORIA

From the Chief

The statistics of our traditional service—fire suppression, rescue, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)—remained fairly consistent with those of 1997. These statistics are available for review at the back of this report.

Our firefighters are receiving enhanced training, especially in hazardous materials, EMS, and customer service. Our inspection and public education divisions are performing a yeoman's job. Additional services—water dive team and the Advanced Life Support unit—are scheduled for 1999.

The area receiving the most attention and acceleration in 1998 is the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program. The Peoria Fire Department is progressively moving toward providing our neighborhoods with more than just the traditional service that is expected. We want to continue building relationships with our neighbors we now enjoy.

We belong to over twenty neighborhood organizations, attending and hosting meetings throughout the City. We continue to work towards ways of making our neighborhoods a better place to live and work. We participate in neighborhood cleanups, present fire safety educational programs, and assist our neighbors any way we can. In cooperation with the Air National Guard, we built playground and picnic areas for neighbors in the Day Spring Park area. We assisted the P. T. O. in renovating the playground at Franklin School. Firefighters, in conjunction with carpenters from Local 183 and at the request of the Central Illinois Center for Independent Living, are building ramps for our wheelchair-bound neighbors. Firefighters renovated a home of one of our neighbors during the Christmas in April Program. We assist the Salvation Army in their quest to provide for the needy. We are part of a campaign to assist the American Red Cross in their blood drives. The firefighters provide dollars and personnel to assist the South Side Mission to feed those less fortunate.

The relationship we are building with our neighbors is, in part, a result of the strong labor/management relationship the Department has built.

This relationship developed through a conflict resolution program that Fire Department labor and management personnel attended several years ago. From that program, we learned that conflict resolution could be achieved through a simple but laborious and sometimes hard-to-accept process. Labor-management advisory committees throughout the Department have produced a composed and highly functional organization. This environment allows us to spend more time with our neighbors and be productive in our community. Many of our achievements in 1998 were due to the attitudes and dedication of our firefighters and civilian personnel, both labor and management, towards "Neighbors Helping Neighbors."

CHIEF ERNIE RUSSELL

Central Station
505 NE Monroe

Station 8 / Fire Garage
806 W. Hurlburt

Station 4
2711 SW Jefferson

First District
Downtown . . . South Town

Councilman Christopher Duncan

First District Statistics

fires	134
dollar loss	$1,576,777
medical calls	2,247
vehicle accidents	481
citizen injuries	13
citizen deaths	1

The First District is original Peoria, the oldest district and the one most rich in historical buildings and historical events. The First District defines Peoria with its downtown skyline and border along the Illinois River, an eastern border with new buildings and renovated buildings.

The First District and the Peoria Fire Department share a long history. Our oldest fire station, Station 4 on SW Jefferson Street, has been home to many firefighters who have responded to dramatic emergencies over the decades as Peoria has grown from its beginnings below the bluff and on toward the north. The photos on these pages show a less dramatic but just as important contribution of our First District firefighters as they help their neighbors during a late summer day of yard work and neighborhood improvement.

Central Station, our largest facility and administrative headquarters, houses nine firefighters and three fire apparatus: Engine-one, Rescue-one, and Truck-one.

Left: Robert Lundholm and Derrick Parker use their carpenter skills during a Christmas in April project.

... The Riverfront

At the Mayor's Annual Rib-Bib Cook-Off, Chief Russell holds high the ribs before handing them to his grillmaster, Glen Brakebill. At right of the Chief, Manual High School basketball coach Wayne McClain announces the delivery of the raw ribs.
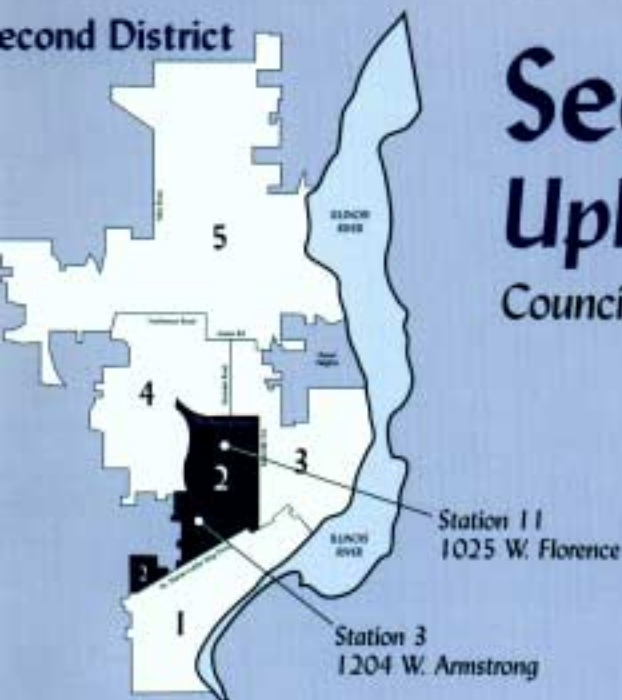
Larry Carter and Dennis Doyle carry away debris from a First District alley during a neighborhood clean-up day.

At Central Station, Tom Carr, Mark Connors, Dennis Doyle, and Gene Snyder line up for dinner.

Second District
Uplands . . . West Bluff . . . B

Councilman Gary Sandberg

5

4

3

2

3

1

Station 11
1025 W. Florence

Station 3
1204 W. Armstrong

Peoria's Second District contains many established neighborhoods with tree-lined streets and boulevards. These neighborhoods are protected by the crews from Stations 3 and 11 who belong to neighborhood associations and helped citizens during clean-up days.

*A ne...
serve*

Second District Statistics

fires	82
dollar loss	$2,282,716
medical calls	931
vehicle accidents	324
citizen injuries	6
citizen deaths	0

Emil Steinseifer and Darren Reeves from Station 3 show their fire engine to children. Firefighters conduct numerous fire safety talks and presentations annually for school children and neighborhood groups.

Firefighters also perform carpentry work for neighborhood projects. The photo below shows the playground equipment that crews from Station 3 built in Day Spring Community Park.

Bradley University

A new rescue squad was delivered in 1998, designated as Rescue One. It will serve the busiest crew in Peoria.

Mike Morrow prepares to use a thermal imaging camera acquired in 1998. The camera makes it easier for firefighters to look for victims in areas of dense smoke. The camera also reveals hidden fires and hot spots in our efforts to thoroughly extinguish structure fires.

Below: Mike Lierle and Randy Osborne carry away refuse during a neighborhood clean-up day in the Uplands Neighborhood.

Second District

Third District

Fourth District

Fifth District

Station 10
3316 N. Wisconsin

Station 12
3004 NE Adams

Third District
Averyville . . . East Bluff . .

Councilwoman Gale Thetford

We are always proud to show our District and At-large Council members the services, equipment, and personnel involved in the public safety protection in their neighborhoods. These community leaders and others participated in a safety demonstration we held last summer at our Training Academy. The picture at lower right shows Councilwoman Gail Thetford having

her breathing apparatus adjusted before she entered the training tower for an interior fire demonstration.

Third District Statistics

fires	71
dollar loss	$497,562
medical calls	917
vehicle accidents	279
citizen injuries	2
citizen deaths	0

These demonstrations show citizens and policy makers the personnel and equipment we use to provide public safety services. The demonstrations also allow citizens to ask questions directly to the experts—our firefighters—in rescue, firefighting, and emergency medical response.

Fire Station 10 protects neighborhoods above the bluff in the Third District and is located on Wisconsin Avenue just south of War Memorial Drive. Fire Station 12 protects neighborhoods below the bluff in Averyville, along NE Adams Street and the Illinois River.

Firefighters gather at a site in the First District along the Illinois River for training in rescue diving, using our rescue boat as a staging platform. The Illinois River forms part of the eastern border of the Third District.

. . Glen Oak Park

Richard Gossmeyer rescues a pet from the scene of a house fire.

Tom Carr adjusts the facepiece of an airmask worn by Councilwoman Gale Thetford at a fire demonstration she attended at the Training Academy last summer.

Third
District

Fourth
District

Fifth
District

Fourth District
Northwoods Mall . . . New

Councilman William Spears

The Fourth District has Peoria's largest shopping area, Northwoods Mall, visited by thousands of shoppers annually. The Mall's center court has been a popular location for our annual Fire Prevention Week display, where firefighters present safety demonstrations. In 1998, firefighters used a simulated bedroom at the Mall to teach over 700 children fire safety actions such as "Stop—Drop—and Roll."
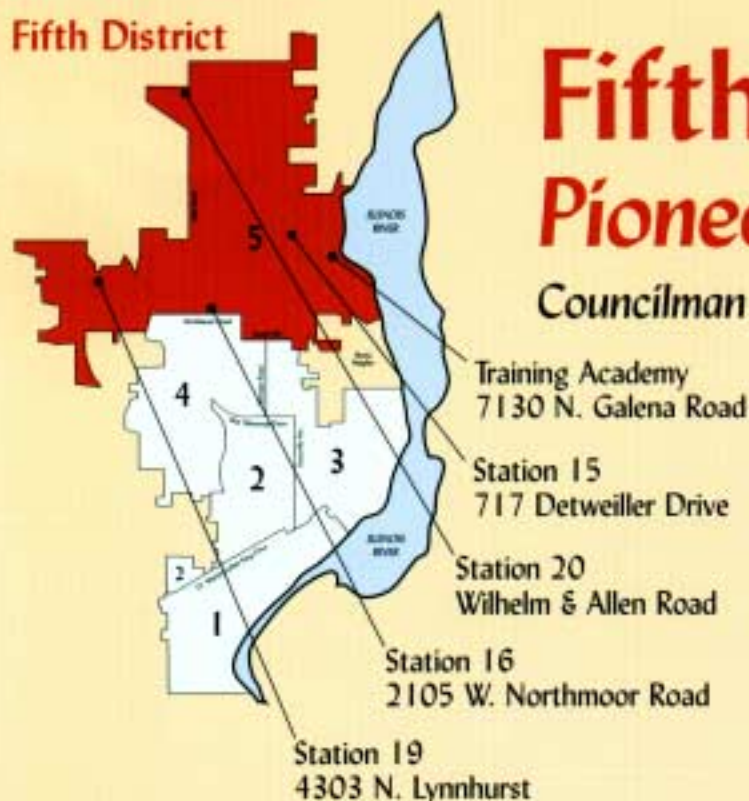
In public safety presentations, our fire safe house has been our most popular way to reach children. The house—built with donated materials and labor—is mobile and visits area schools. The scaled-down house has many features of a full-sized house: a porch, two levels, rooms, stairs, and windows. The house can be filled with a harmless white smoke to simulate a house fire. Children inside are then instructed to stay low and crawl to the nearest exit.

In 1998, we made 21 presentations with the fire safe house, reaching almost 3,000 children.

Station 13
2114 W. Richwoods

Fourth District Statistics

fires	43
dollar loss	$590,125
medical calls	949
vehicle accidents	278
citizen injuries	0
citizen deaths	0

Phil Maclin, Public Education Officer, talks with pre-schoolers about fire safety.

Fifth District
Pioneer Park . . . Upper Peor

Councilman Patrick Nichting

Training Academy
7130 N. Galena Road

Station 15
717 Detweiler Drive

Station 20
Wilhelm & Allen Road

Station 16
2105 W. Northmoor Road

Station 19
4303 N. Lynnhurst

The Fifth District is the largest of the five council districts and contains the most fire stations of any district. Its boundaries are also expanding north and west and, to meet this growth, we are planning a new fire station just east of the intersection of Allen and Wilhelm Roads.

The new station will help us maintain our quick response time to these new neighborhoods, a time that puts us at most addresses in under four minutes.

Groundbreaking for this new fire station—Station 20—is scheduled for the fall of 1999. Its appearance will resemble the new Station 15, opened in 1998, at the intersection of Detweiler Drive and Knoxville Avenue.

Chief Russell is one among many other firefighters who donated blood during a summer blood drive. The drive set the firefighters against officers from the Police Department, Sheriff's Department, and Advanced Medical Transport to see which group could donate the most blood. The firefighters won the contest by giving 172 units.

The Peoria Fire Training Academy, located on the river side of the Fifth District, provides classroom and hands-on facilities for many aspects of fire training. The training supervisor welcomes students from the New Life Christian Academy as they begin a tour of the Fire Academy.
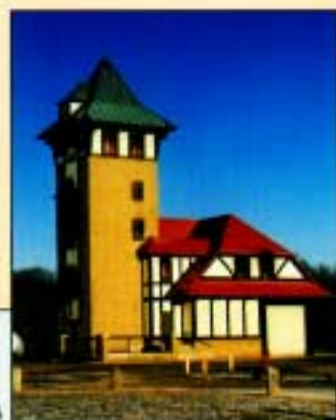
ria Lake . . . Weaver Ridge

Fifth District Statistics

fires	36
dollar loss	$209,900
medical calls	667
vehicle accidents	203
citizen injuries	3
citizen deaths	0
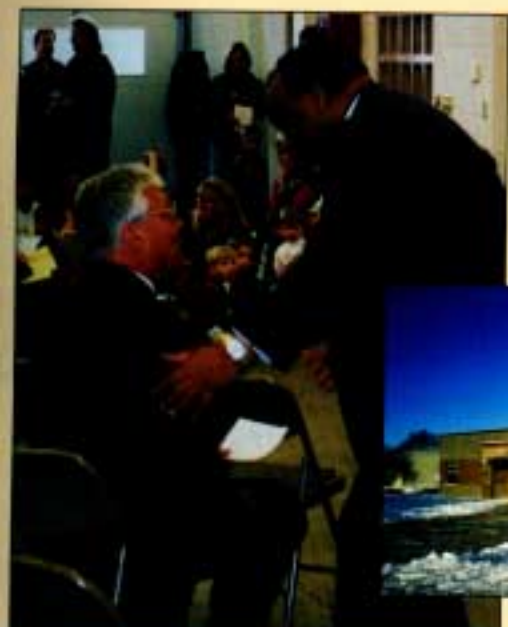
Mayor Lowell Grieves and City Manager Michael McKnight on the apparatus floor at the opening ceremony of Station 15.

The photo at right shows the lot for the new fire station. The lot is a corn field now, but note the new houses in the photo's background. The now vacant land will soon be filled with new houses and neighborhoods. And firefighters will be involved in those neighborhoods.

At right, Curt Simpson describes to Council members the uses of the protective clothing firefighters wear at incidents involving hazardous materials.

Fifth District

Representatives of Local 50 and the Fire Administration discuss several of many issues concerning personnel, procedures, and services. From left to right: Tony Ardis, Chief Roy Modglin, Kent Tomblin, Chief Ernie Russell, and Chief David Johnston.

Labor - Management Relations

Firefighters are the core of any fire department. To allow each firefighter a voice in departmental policy, the Fire Administration and Local 50 meet on different administrative levels concerning various topics via many committees staffed by volunteers and appointed or elected representatives.

Labor - Management Committee– Meets quarterly to discuss issues concerning personnel and policy. Includes most members of the Fire Administration and the Executive Board of Local 50.

Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) Committee– Drafts, approves, and distributes the many fireground and administrative guidelines that describe areas such as routine tasks at fire stations and tactics at emergencies.

Spec Committee– Meets monthly to plan and set the specifications for new apparatus such as fire engines, aerial trucks, and rescue squads. Members visit other fire departments for ideas and inspect work-in-progress on orders at factories.

Safety Committee– Meets monthly to address safety issues to include equipment, fire stations, apparatus, and procedures. The Committee solicits input from firefighters and determines if suggestions should receive further action.

Computer Committee– Determines computer requirements for receiving alarms and for reporting alarm data. Identifies needs concerning hardware and software.

Recruiting Committee– Organizes recruiting efforts in schools and in the general public and helps the City's Personnel Department prepare for the physical agility test that occurs once every two years.

Foreign Fire Tax Committee– Processes proposed equipment needs to the Foreign Fire Tax Fund. Some items bought during the past few years include a fire boat, defibrillators, and exercise equipment for fire stations.

Comparative Statistics

Alarms

1998	10,232
1997	10,063
1996	9,788
1995	9,243
1994	7,826

The figures at left show the total number of separate alarms responded to in each year for the past five years. It includes categories such as fires, rescues, medical calls, and special duties.

BLS Calls

1998	5,711
1997	5,438
1996	5,203
1995	5,018
1994	4,763

BLS (Basic Life Support) calls are medical calls for emergencies such as heart attacks, strokes, seizures, and broken bones. We are usually on the scene for these calls in most areas in the City within four minutes.

Loss Fires

1998	366
1997	470
1996	437
1995	573
1994	486

A "loss fire" means that an assessed value was placed on the damaged property. These figures include buildings, vehicles, and personal property. A trash fire would not normally be included in this category.

Budget

1998	$11,360,040
1997	$10,856,168
1996	$10,602,157
1995	$10,062,853
1994	$9,702,853

The budget figures shown at left represent operating expenses such as salaries, supplies, and equipment, but does not include capital expenses such as vehicles and buildings.

Dollar Loss

1998	$5,157,080
1997	$3,549,049
1996	$2,582,605
1995	$3,097,898
1994	$2,942,086

This category shows the annual total of property lost to fire, given in dollar values current for each specific year. For example, the dollar loss in 1994 is given according to the value of the dollar in that year.

Training Hours

1998	15,252
1997	16,749
1996	15,545
1995	14,595
1994	15,106

The training hours at left represent formal training hours in exercises such as live fires, recruit classes and specialty classes such as auto extrication and hazardous materials.

Investigations   Arsons   Building Inspections

	Investigations	Arsons	Building Inspections
1998	115	40	2,001
1997	93	38	1,950
1996	147	56	1,718
1995	154	78	1,717
1994	143	59	1,225

In the table above, "Investigations" are those fires requiring an investigator to determine its cause. The next column, "Arsons," lists the number of those investigated fires ruled as arson. For example, in 1998, of the 115 fires investigated, 40 were caused by arsonists. The last column, "Building Inspections," lists the number of commercial buildings inspected for fire safety by on-duty firefighters.

Extra-Alarm Fires

Date	Alarm	Address	Type
24 FEB	3-11	2125 W. Malone	house
09 MAR	2-11	902 W. Moss	apartments
23 MAR	2-11	1533 S. Faraday	house
31 MAR	2-11	836 W. Russell	apartments
11 APR	2-11	3228 NE Adams	business
22 APR	2-11	1505 W. Howett	house
11 MAY	3-11	210 S. Saratoga	school
13 MAY	2-11	514 Spring	apartments
22 MAY	2-11	708 Hancock	house
27 MAY	2-11	5250 N. Knoxville	apartments
04 JUN	2-11	1604 W. Bradley	house
03 JUL	2-11	4027 N. War Memorial	restaurant
25 AUG	2-11	806 NE Perry	apartments

A single-alarm fire requires one aerial-ladder truck and two fire engines. A two-alarm fire (2-11) adds a second aerial-ladder truck and extra fire engines. A three-alarm fire (3-11) on February 24th required three aerial-ladder trucks and five engines.

New Firefighters
Robert P. Lundholm
Shawn A. Sollberger
Stephany L. Johnson
Nicholas Ellenwood
Michael W. Richardson
Terry J. Redshaw
Frank B. Bevirt

Retirements
Raymond E. Russell

Most Number of Runs
R-1: 1,838

Promotions
to Division Chief
Curtis A. Simpson

to Battalion Chief
Glen M. Brakebill
Michael B. Ogburn
James Phelan

to Captain
Richard Booth
Michael T. Levine
Larry L. Lovell

to engineer
Mark J. Powers
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